

HERCULES is celebrable for his harde traualles; he dauntede the proude Centaures, half hors, half man; and he birafted the dyspoylling from the cruel lyon, that is to seyn, he slough the lyon and raffe him his skin. He smoot the briddes that brighten Arpyres with ceruin arwes. He ravisshed apples fro the waking dragoun, and his hand was the more hevy for the goldene metal. He drow Cerberus, the hound of helle, by his treble cheyne. He, overcomer, as it is seyd, hath put an unmeke lord foddre to his cruel hors; this is to seyn, that Hercules slough Diomedes, & made his hors to fretten him. And he, Hercules, slough Ydra the serpent, and brende the venom. And Achelous the flood, defouled in his forhed, dreyneth his shamefast visage in his strondes; this is to seyn, that Achelous coude transfigure himself into dyverse lynnesses; and, as

NE doute thee therof nothing, quod
I. for, for to knowen thilke thinges
togedere, in the whiche thinges I

he faught with Hercules, at the laste he
tornede him into a bole; and Hercules brake
of oon of his hornes, and he, for shame,
hidde him in his river. And he, Hercules,
caste adoun Antheus the gyaunt in the
strondes of Libie; and Cacus apayseed the
wrathtes of Evander; this is to seyn, that
Hercules slowe the monstre Cacus, and
apayseed with that deeth the wrathte of
Evander. And the bristled boor marked
with scomes the shuldres of Hercules, the
whiche shuldres the heyre cerle of hevene
sholde thriste. And the laste of his la-
bours was, that he sustened the hevene
upon his nekke unbowed; & he deservede
eftsones the hevene, to ben the prynces
his laste traivale.

GOTH now thanne, ye stronge men,
theras the heye way of the grette
ensample ledeth yow. Onyce men,
why nake ye youre bakkes? As who seyth:
O ye slowe and delicat men, why flee ye ad-
versitees, and ne figheten nat ayeins hem
by vertu, to winnen the mede of the he-
vene? For the erthe, overcomen, yeeveth the
sterres; this is to seyn, that, whan that
erthely lust is overcomen, a man is made
worthy to the hevене.

delyte me greetly, that shal ben to me in
stede of reste; sin it is nat to dourten of
the thinges folwinge, whan every syde of
thy disputacioun shal han be stedefast to
me by undoutous feith.

THANNE seyde she: That manere
wyl I don the; & bigan to speken
right thus. Certes, quod she, yif
any wight diffinishe hap in this manere,
that is to seyn, that hap is bytydinge y
brought forth by foolish moevinge and by
no knettinge of causes, I conferme that
hap nis right naught in no wyse; and I
deme aloudrely that hap nis, ne dwelleth
but a voice, as who seith, but an ydel word,
withouten any significacioun of thing sub-
mitted to that voys. For what place might
ben left, or dwellinge, to folye and to disor-
deraunce, sin that God ledeth and con-
streineth alle thinges by ordre? for this
sentence is verray & sooth, that Nothing
ne hath his beinge of naught; to the whiche
sentence none of those olde folk ne with-
seyde never; albeit so that they ne un-
derstoden ne meneden it naught by God,
prince and beginner of werkinge, but they
casten it as a manere foundement of sub-
ject material, that is to seyn, of the nature
of alle resoun. And yif that any thing is
woven or comen of no causes, than shal it
seme that thilke thing is comen or woven

of naught; but yif this ne may nat ben
don, thanne is it nat possible, that hap be
any swich thing. ¶ How shal it thanne be
lied heerforin. ¶ His ther thanne nothing that by
quod I. Nis ther hapne either hap or elles
right may be cleped either hap or elles
Aventure of fortune; or is ther aught,
albeit so that it is hid fro the peple, to
which these wordes ben covenable. ¶ Myn
Aristotolis, quod she, in the booke of his
phisik, diffinissheth this thing by short
phaisil, and neigh to the sothe. ¶ In which
quod I.

Manere quod I.
Menere, quod she, as men doon any
 thing for grace of any other thing,
 and another thing than thilke thing
 that men entendon to don bytydeth by
 some causes, it is cleped Hap. Right as
 a man fall the erthe by cause of tilyinge
 of the feeld, and founde ther a gobet or
 gold bidolven, thanne wenen folk that it
 is bifalle by fortunous bytydinge. But, for
 sothe, it is nis nat of naught, for it hath his
 propre causes; of whiche causes the cours
 unforsceyn & unwar semeth to han maked
 hap. For yif the tilyere of the feeld ne dolve
 nat in the erthe, and yif the hyder of the
 gold ne hadde hid the gold in thilke place,
 the gold ne hadde nat been founde. Thise
 ben thanne the causes of the abregginge
 of fortuit hap, the which abregginge of
 fortuit hap comth of causes encontringe
 and flowinge togidre to himself, and nat
 by the entencioun of the deer. For neither
 by the hyder of the gold ne the deliver of the
 feeld ne understoden nat that the gold
 sholde han been founde; but, as I sayde, it
 bitidde and ran togidre that he fall theras
 that other hadde hid the gold. Now may I
 thus diffinishe Hap. Hap is an unwar bi-
 tydinge of causes assembled in thinges
 that ben don for som other thing. But
 thilke ordre, proceedinge by an uneschu-
 able bindinge togidre, which that descend-
 eth fro the welle of purviance that ordi-
 neth alle thinges in hir places and in hir
 tymes, maketh that the causes rennen and
 assemblen togidre.

Metre I.
Rupis Hchemenie scopulis, ubi versa se-
quentum.

TIGRIS & Eufrates resoulen
and springen of so welle, in
the craggess of the roche of
the contree of Achemenie,
theras the fleinge bataille sic
etheth hir dartes, returned in
the brestes of hem that solwen hem. And
sonc after the same riveres, Tigris &
Eufrates, unjoinen and departen hir wateres.
And yif they comen togideres, and ben as
sembled and cleped togidere into o cours,
thanne moten thilke thinges fleten togi-

dere which that the water of the entre-
changinge flood bringeth. The shippes &
the stokes arraced with the flood moten
assemblen; & the wateres ymelled wrap-
peth or implethy many fortune happes or
maneres; the whiche wandringe happes,
nathes, thilke declyninge lownesse of
the erthe and the flowinge ordre of the
slydinge water governeth. Right so for-
tune, that semeth as that it fleteth with
slaked or ungoverned byrdes, it suffer-
eth byrdes, that is to seyn, to be governed,
and passeth by thilke lawe, that is to seyn,
by thilke diwyne ordenance.

HIS understonde I wel, quod I, and I acorde wel that it is right as thou seyst. But I axe yif ther be any libertee of free wil in this ordre of causes that clyven thus togidere in hem self; or elles I wolde witen yif that the destinal cheyne constreyneth the movinges of the corages of men?

IS, quod she; ther is libertee of free wil. Ne ther ne was nevere no nature of resoun that it ne hadde libertee of free wil. For every thing that may naturally use resoun, it hath doom by which it discerneth & demeth every thing; thanne knoweth it, by itself, things that ben to flee and things that ben to desiren. And thilke thing that any wight demeth to ben desired, that axeth or desireth he; & fleeth thilke thing that he troweth ben to flee. Wherefore in alle things is libertee of resoun is, in hem also is libertee of willinge and of nilling. But I ne ordeyne nat, as who seyth, Ingrauntenat, that this libertee be evenelyk in alle things, forwhy in the sovereynes deevynes substaunces, that is to seyn, in spirits, judgement is more cleer, and wil nat ycorumped, and might redy to spedden things that ben desired. But the soules of men moten nedes be more free when they loken hem in the speculacioun or lookinge of the devyne thought, and lasse free when they slyden into the bodies; and yit lasse free when they ben gadered togidre & comprehended in erthely membres. But the laste servage is whan that they ben yeven to vyces, & han yfalle from the possession of hir propre resoun. For after that they han cast away hir eyen fro the light of the sovereyn soothfastnesse to lowe things and derke, anon they derken by the cloude of ignorance & ben troubled by felonous talents; to the whiche tal-

Boethius de
Consolatione
Philosophie.
Book V.